

USDA/Rural Development

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News Release

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT MARKS EARTH DAY

(\$108 MILLION IN RURAL WATER AND WASTEWATER PROJECTS ANNOUNCED)

Surfside Beach, Texas, April 22, 2002--Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development Mike Neruda today announced more than \$108 million in rural water and wastewater projects, and urged Americans to observe Earth Day by reaffirming their commitment to protecting the earth's air, water, and land.

"Each of us bears the responsibility of being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us, not only for ourselves, but for generations yet to come," said Neruda. "We need to remember that every day is Earth Day, especially for rural Americans, who live close to the land and make their livings from it."

Neruda said that USDA Rural Development, through its Rural Utilities Service (RUS), is doing its part by working with rural communities across America to build and modernize water and wastewater disposal systems. "Today we are announcing the funding of 46 projects to build and improve rural water and sewage systems, totaling nearly \$108 million," said Neruda. "In rural communities in 34 states, USDA Rural Development is observing the importance of Earth Day. Rural communities are doing their part to preserve our earth by installing or upgrading water and wastewater systems to be in compliance with environmental requirements. Hundreds of thousands of Americans will benefit through cleaner water for municipal supplies, recreation, and wildlife resources."

"One of the goals of USDA Rural Development is to provide water and wastewater treatment programs that target public health benefits and provide economic opportunities to America's rural communities," said Bryan Daniel, Texas State Director. "USDA's water and wastewater loan program helps rural communities keep pace with the needs of their rising populations."

One example of the projects announced today is The Village of Surfside Beach, who will receive a \$881,000 loan and a \$700,000 grant. The funds will be used to construct a new sewer collection system, which will eliminate use of individual septic systems, which are often ineffective during periods of high groundwater. A total 374 connections will be added.



NOTE: The 60 plus events being held across the United States represent \$142 million in USDA funds for water and wastewater projects. This amount includes the \$108 million announced today by Deputy Under Secretary Neruda.

For more information regarding USDA Rural Development programs, contact the Angleton Local Office at (979) 849-5251, extension 4.

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

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The USDA Rural Development mission area was created in 1994 and includes the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, the Rural Housing Service, and the Rural Utilities Service. Its mission is to use the resources of USDA to provide an improved quality of life for the nation's 53 million rural people.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service and Rural Utilities Service. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting the USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

For more information on USDA Rural Development programs in Texas, check our web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>.

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